

EDITORIAL

By Karen Burgess

A Modest Reprisal—with apologies to Jonathan Swift. I wish to extend my thanks to you, the students of the University of New Brunswick. It is with the utmost admiration that I commend you for your efforts to tighten your belts, to bite the bullet, to heroically attempt to save your Student Union hundreds of dollars in ballot counters wages and in monies for poll station supervisors; to protect the environment by cutting down on campaign-postering and ballot-printing, to sustain the aesthetic atmosphere of this venerable campus from the plethora of unsightly smiling baby-kissing-and-hard-shaking photocopied campaign photos, and most of all, for restoring in me my faith in the human virtue of fair play.

For this student body's epic lack of concern for the worldly—possibly corrupting—realm of student politics, for its ascetic sense of self denial, for its extreme politeness and consideration for those candidates who entered the quest for student unionhood first, I wholeheartedly express my extreme gratitude.

Yes, thanks to the efforts of the students of this campus, all of the positions on the Student Union council and its executive have been acclaimed except for the two positions of science rep for which three people had the audacity to run. (No doubt the rapprochement of their incredibly civil peers will compel them to do the sportsmanlike thing and, perhaps, flip for the honour. Perhaps the anomaly was all caused by some huge misunderstanding, for surely no one would challenge the old saying, 'First come first serve' by which the rest of this heroic electoral battle has been staged.)

Some faculties, like education, phys. ed. and nursing, have such a highly developed sense of fair play that no one wanted to usurp the role of council representative which someone else might have been considering; hence, no-one has stepped forward to run.

It brings tears to my eyes to consider that this gargantuan effort may have been wasted. All those students who, like the martyrs of old, valued the feelings of others above their own and refused to assume the glorious mantle of spring election candidacy may have sacrificed themselves for nought.

Alas, the Student Union will still have to run the election. Ballots will still have to be printed, collected, processed, counted, certified and destroyed to complete a yes/no vote to ratify the candidates. Furthermore, a vote must be held to decide the SUB expansion referendum, and to elect the Grad Class executive and this year's valedictorian.

Fear not, noble friends, for this cloud too may have its silver lining—perhaps we can still uphold the widespread moral fortitude displayed by all those on campus except the Grads of 95, the SU, SUB Expansion contingent, and the aspiring valedictorian. Last year, at Fredericton High School, the graduating ceremony was addressed by co-valedictorians. Perhaps one

could take this road at UNB: the valedictory could be given by four glorious grads—male, female, academic geniuses, sporto-jock types, short, tall, funny, serious—truly representative of the entire grad class. The grads of '95 could be ruled by co-co presidents, the triumvirate of VP's promotion etc. We could also give our opinion on the SU's of SUB expansion, giving them the mandate to proceed halfway but forbidding them to bring the project to its fruition—the expansion kitty would be a completely neutral 50% full/empty if we only approved an expenditure of \$12.50 instead of the proposed \$25.

Others have attempted to persuade me that the alphabetical order system would ask be a viable choice for sustaining the sportsmanlike aura of the elections, but I must disagree. The first person on the list could conceivably have been the last person to enter the contest. Since there is no way to find out who brought in their nomination first—thanks to the SU's sealed nomination process—the only way to be fair to all candidates is to elect them all.

The Student Union attempted a small coup yesterday, by asking council to approve a motion to extend the nomination period of the elections until March 4. Mais pourquoi, you may ask? Surely it is obvious that the students who have already submitted their nominations are the ones who have the energy and enthusiasm to lead these students. It is with the utmost dismay that I have to inform you, gentle reader, that several council members (no doubt those who were seated as a result of some barbarous vote which resulted in some candidate's goals being crushed), attempted to discredit the achievement by saying the acclamations were a result of scanty advertising, or the absence of posters on campus. Some members of the council actually expressed their dismay that this atavistic ritual of pitting student against student would not be played out this year. No gladiators could be inspired to take part in this hard-hearted game, eh? Hah!

Revel, yes, I said 'revel' in the ascendance of the students of UNB, the credit lies not with your lot, election organizers, it is an accomplishment of individuals who have reached their most glorious apex.

To all those who sacrificed their political aspirations to preserve the moral integrity of the electoral process—my hat is off to you.

To the councillors and executive-elect, know that you have been acclaimed at the expense of the dreams of countless others. I hope the weight of responsibility won't burden you too heavily but will instead spur you on to greater heights.

To those candidates anxiously awaiting February 24th, perhaps you would do well to curb your competitive attitudes and become less predatory in your goals. One should take note of the attitudes and mores of the rest of the campers and learn to cooperate and work as a team.

Otherwise, in the spirit of true democracy at UNB, may the first man win.

MUGWUMP

BY
JAMES ROWAN

There is a tremendous opportunity for rigging the Student Union elections—and it's perfectly legal, too. Some Bosnitch-haired powermonger could get all his friends and associates to run for the executive and create a cult-of-personality that by its very existence poses serious threats to the future of democracy on this campus. If this were to happen—of course it wouldn't—said president could rule with almost dictatorial power. Fortunately, this would never happen, would it?

And another thing: the Vice-President (Finance and Administration) position has become the (semi) official grooming position for President. Lutes, van Raalte, Estabrooks. Only Burchill broke up this chain. Nothing against bean-counters, but why is it always the money guy that gets appointed? After all, they're all business students. That really scares me. It seems that a message is being sent (unofficially), that only Business Administration students have the responsibility necessary for the job of Vice-President (money) and (by extension) President. Look folks, this simply isn't true. Strangely enough, the job of Vice-President (Finance and Administration) has no real requirements for Business Admin training. You don't do any accounting. You don't do any money management. You don't do much at all financially. Your job is prioritization. What is most important, what is next in line, what is getting funding, what isn't. That's the job. The administration part of the job is also important, but most of that just got handed off to VP Student Services and the General Manager. The job, as it stands, is quite simply one of prioritizing the many demands on the SU's funds. The narrowing of the eligible candidates creates the danger of tunnel vision. What I'm talking about is the vision thing. Before running for President or any other executive, you have to have some picture of what you intend to accomplish. We have been fortunate to have had a real leader this year, not a caretaker executive like the last two years. Where is the vision for the future? If it consists entirely of not wanting to run an election campaign, the students of this university have had a disservice done to them.

Electoral reform: it has to happen and it has to happen now. This farce (sorry, I meant election) is the most aggravating, frustrating, moronic thing that I have witnessed in four years at this campus. The current rules have effectively destroyed participatory democracy. They have set up the UNB Student Union for potential control by special interest groups with (semi) hidden agendas and conservative types who don't want the Student Union to actually do anything because the only

Democracy In Action: Democracy Inaction

reason that they are running is to build their resumes. There should be a requirement for at least two candidates for each executive position, and the election shouldn't happen unless this condition is met.

In my opinion, the real problem with the elections is confidentiality. As it stands: the Student Union refuses to reveal the identities of those who have submitted nomination forms; in fact, it is forbidden to disclose even whether anyone has submitted nomination forms yet. What this means is that I as a student have no way of knowing whether someone unacceptable to me is running. Morons, idiots and wackos can get acclaimed quite easily if no one knows that they are running. Furthermore, the nomination period should be extended by a week to allow people more time to think about things.

Calling an extraordinary meeting is rather extraordinary. Not being able to find a copy of the current By-Laws is extraordinary. Not being able to find proper minutes is extraordinary. Giving the CRO mistaken instructions is not extraordinary, but it is unsettling. The Student Union has caused tremendous dissension in the ranks, a total loss of respect in many peoples' eyes and horrible PR because they couldn't keep their files in order and didn't bother to verify verbal instructions.

Most disturbing, however, has been the attitude of some councillors. The fate of democracy at UNB is being decided and you're complaining about having to show up early? What I feel towards some of Council and most of the candidates is total disgust. We are electing people to represent us and protect our interests. If this conflicts with your desire to screw off for the weekend instead of campaigning, too god damn bad! If putting up some posters is more than you're willing to do in the interests of sustaining the democratic system, then you have no business running for Council. The apathy of the students disturbs me, but the apathy of the people actually running this year sickens me. What a bunch of pathetic, whining children! The motion to rescind was a bad idea: it shouldn't have come to that. The decision should have been voluntary; all parties should have, in the best interests of the Student Union (all 7000 of us), voluntarily extended nominations so that democracy had half a chance.

All I can say is that I am glad I'm graduating and not coming back.



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